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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5875  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000146

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KWMN](#) [KHIV](#) [KDEM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: AMBASSADOR ADDRESSES POLITICS,  
PREVENTION, PRODUCTION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH IN POKHARA

Summary  
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¶1. (U) During a recent three-day visit to Pokhara and Kaski District in western Nepal, the Ambassador discussed politics with local politicians, government officials and human rights personnel. She visited USAID field sites for HIV/AIDS, natural resource and agricultural programs. The Ambassador also gave a major speech encouraging economic growth and launched the Nepali version of a primer on the free market.

Election Preparations Under Way?  
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¶2. (U) In the course of a January 16-18 trip to Pokhara, the capital of Kaski District and Nepal's Western Development Region, the Ambassador met with local government officials, political party leaders, representatives of human rights organizations and ordinary citizens to get a personal impression of political developments outside of the Kathmandu Valley. The politicians claimed to be planning for the Constituent Assembly (CA) election scheduled for April 10, but they gave no indication that any campaigning had started in the district.

Dealing With the Disappeared  
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¶3. (U) The leading government representative in the district, the Acting Chief District Officer (CDO) Sagar Parajuli, informed her that the different political parties, including the Maoists, had recently met to discuss the question of the disappeared and wounded during the war. Estimates of the disappeared in Kaski ranged from 41 to 49 -- with about 14 or so victims of the Maoists and the rest victims of the Government security forces. He suggested most of those severely injured in the conflict remain too frightened to come forward for compensation. He described most of the claims filed as fraudulent. The CDO, who was abducted by the Maoists, saw this meeting as a significant step in addressing some of the

atrocities perpetrated by both sides and a step toward national reconciliation.

#### Helping HIV/AIDS Victims

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¶4. (U) The Ambassador also saw a wide range of USAID HIV/AIDS programs that covered the continuum of services from prevention to treatment and care. The programs were noteworthy because they were able to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups such as intravenous drug users and commercial sex workers. She heard the personal stories of the challenges of HIV/AIDS when she met with people living with AIDS, former commercial sex workers and intravenous drug users.

#### Promoting Women and Agriculture

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¶5. (U) The roles of women were highlighted in visits to USAID's agricultural program outside Pokhara in Dhikurpokhari. The Ambassador interacted with women members of agricultural marketing committees who explained how their income had increased by over 50 percent as a result of U.S. assistance. Women were also prominent during her discussion with community forest user's groups that were receiving training in good governance through USAID.

#### Highlighting the Need for Economic Growth

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¶6. (U) While in Pokhara, the Ambassador visited the American Corner where, in a meeting with the management, she highlighted the importance of the

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American Corners in reaching youth outside of Kathmandu. Management enthusiastically embraced the Ambassador's offer for visiting Mission personnel to deliver programming at the Corner. The Ambassador also gave a speech to over 75 people -- businesspeople, academics, local leaders, young people -- at an event hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce and the American Corner to highlight the need for economic growth and to launch the Nepali version of the book, "The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible: A Free Market Odyssey." The speech was well received and received significant press coverage in the local and national news media.

#### Comment

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¶7. (SBU) While the politicians claimed to be planning for CA elections, community members the Ambassador met expressed strong interest in voting, but were skeptical the elections would take place. Nearly two years after the end of the Maoist insurgency, people in Kaski District are still trying to come to terms with the impact of the conflict and the promise of peace. With USG support, they are learning how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, how to increase their incomes and improve their lives through sustainable agriculture and natural resource management and about economic principles, but there is much work still to be done.

POWELL